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SUBJECT: NATO PERMREPS' SEPTEMBER 18 AWAY DAY

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: NATO PermReps and the Secretary General (SYG) brainstormed about goals for the April 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest and NATO headquarters reform at an all-day offsite on September 18. PermReps expressed no objection to the idea of a missile defense deliverable at Bucharest, although some Allies called for pairing missile defense with a renewed NATO focus on arms control. Most new Allies declared a readiness to invite all three countries in the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to join NATO in 2008, with many others signaling support for a "regional approach" if performance warrants. Perm Reps generally favored the SYG's proposed timeline to begin work in 2009 on a new NATO Strategic Concept. While most Allies supported a vision of Bucharest consistent with ours, a small core of nations (Germany, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) clearly signaled a minimal level of ambition on various subjects. France was notably not among them. End Summary.

¶2. (C) NATO PermReps gathered September 18 with the SYG for a full-day of consultation on the agenda for the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO reform, and management challenges.

Proposals for Bucharest 2008

¶3. (C) The SYG proposed three baskets of issues that are largely in line with U.S. thinking:

A) &NATO Serving Global Security⁸ (Including current operations in Afghanistan, possible development of a future NATO-Afghan relationship resembling PfP, and Global Partnerships).

B) &Enlargement and Integration⁸ (Including possible invitations for the countries in MAP, and a possible move for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia from PfP to Intensified Dialogue, plus MAP for Georgia).

C) &Capabilities⁸ (Focusing on what the SYG described as &21st Century security tools⁸ such as cyber defense, missile defense and energy security).

¶4. (C) Regarding events to be held at the Summit itself, the SYG suggested the Summit not include a meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), Mediterranean Dialogue, or Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). No PermRep objected, although the French PermRep said his authorities might want some participation of Mediterranean countries.

¶5. (C) The SYG proposed opening the Summit with a 1 1 dinner.

The following day would commence with a formal meeting of the NAC to take enlargement decisions and a "26 n" meeting on Afghanistan. A NATO Ukraine Commission meeting, and finally a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council should also be considered.

Enlargement

¶6. (C) The PermReps, discussion on enlargement showed growing support for membership for the three MAP countries in ¶2008. Countries thinking admission for all three is likely included: Belgium (whose PermRep said he would try to convince his next government this was the right outcome), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the UK. Turkey and France also made positive noises, though they were non-committal. Greece was alone in suggesting that none of the three might be ready. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, and Norway also all supported Intensified Dialogue for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in 2008. There was no evidence of movement on the issue of MAP for Georgia, with the issue split along previous lines.

Missile Defense

¶7. (C) Without defining the specifics, both Ambassador Nuland and the SYG said missile defense must be a deliverable at the 2008 summit. None of the PermReps objected to this, though Belgium, Germany, Norway, Iceland, and Spain said the issue of missile defense needs to be paired with a visible NATO commitment to arms-control. Ambassador Nuland questioned what, concretely, those Allies were seeking on arms control, noting most arms control issues are handled in other fora. She left the door open to further discussion of where NATO could add value but rejected an explicit linkage to moving forward with missile defense. The Czechs, Dutch and Danes expressed themselves happy to consider an arms-control context for missile defense, but said such a component is not essential, and should not hinder progress. (Meanwhile Germany is shopping a paper to some Allies calling for the Bucharest communique to say that MD makes sense in a framework where NATO energizes global non-proliferation (like NPT, PSI and MTCR), talks nuclear posture in the NRC, develops new CSBMs to bolster the CFE process, and more vocally encourages the ongoing strategic and conventional arms control agenda.)

New Strategic Concept

¶8. (C) The SYG expressed his view that a new Strategic Concept for NATO would be a very considerable undertaking for the United States at a time when it would be changing Administrations. He suggested tasking a new Strategic Concept at the 2009 German summit for adoption in 2010. France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and the Czech Republic supported a tasking in 2009. Belgium and the Czech Republic made the argument that this timeline would allow the process to take place at the same time as the EU's own revised security strategy. Denmark and Poland were flexible and Canada, Germany, Norway, and Turkey were non-committal. Slovenia alone called for a 2008 tasking with work completed by 2009.

Headquarters Reform

¶9. (C) PermReps reacted strongly to the 1.5 million Euro cost estimate in the SYG's proposal to collocate the IS and IMS as part of headquarters reform (outlined in two papers distributed by the SYG prior to the meeting). Most thought the co-location of the IS and IMS would be welcome, but the only affordable way forward would be for the budget-neutral & virtual collocation⁸ option also offered by the SYG. Ambassador Nuland and UK PermRep questioned the cost estimate to collocate the staff, asking whether collocation could not be achieved for far less money.

¶10. (C) Most of the PermReps were in favor of the SYG's reform proposals, suggesting he could implement his proposals

under his existing authority. The Secretary General asked that PermReps keep this instruction in mind in the future and refrain from impeding reform every time one of their national's employment prospects is imperiled by this restructuring.

NATO Budget

¶11. (C) Many PermReps stressed the importance of zero real growth in the budget. Ambassador Nuland made the case to look again at the elements of the science budget. Many PermReps seemed surprised when she mentioned that 20 percent of the science budget goes to Russia.

Revival of the Group of Deputies

¶12. (C) PermReps generally agreed with the proposal to re-launch the Group of Deputies (a gathering of Deputy PermReps chaired by the Deputy SYG to enhance strategic planning). Bulgaria, France, Germany, and Spain all expressed reservations, but said they would not block consensus. All agreed that the Group would not do the work of the Senior Political Committee, nor would it take decisions more appropriate for consideration by the NAC. Instead the Group of Deputies would focus on planning the NAC's work, time management and pushing issues out of committees and up for decision by the NAC.

NULAND